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## Dedication

To the memory of Annie Lady Brassey  
*Arduis sæpe, metu numquam*

The Brassey Memorial in Catsfield Church, East Sussex reads:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
ANNIE LADY BRASSEY  
DIED AT SEA 14 SEPTEMBER 1887  
COMMITTED TO THE DEEP AT  
SUNSET IN  
LAT:15°50'S., LONG:110°.35'E.  
SHE LOVED THE GOD OF NATURE  
SHE DIED IN TENDEREST LOVE &  
CHARITY IN TRUST TO BE FORGIVEN  
ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP  
I LAY ME DOWN IN PEACE TO SLEEP  
SECURE I REST UPON THE WAVE  
FOR THOU O LORD HAST POWER TO SAVE  
I KNOW THOU WILT NOT SLIGHT MY CALL  
FOR THOU DOST MARK THE SPARROW FALL  
THY WAY IS IN THE SEA AND THY  
PATH IN THE GREAT WATERS

Bexhill Museum  
No. L 2197

## **Chapter 1. Lady Brassey - travel-writer & collector.**

### **The collection at Bexhill Museum.**

Annie Lady Brassey has been a source of considerable interest to me, both in my private studies and as Curator of Bexhill Museum. During my study of her I have attempted to discern the motivation for her collecting and the significance of the collection. It seems that Annie Brassey acted more like a museum curator than a private collector: she was motivated by more than a self-centred desire to collect and she used her collection for the public benefit. Brassey's acquisition of objects was also an attempt to enhance the status of herself and her family.

My first contact with Brassey was through working on her geological collection at Bexhill Museum in East Sussex. The Brassey material was the oldest and most extensive part of the collection and had the best documentation. After some research it became clear that the collector was just as interesting as the collection itself and that the specimens were just part of a much larger private collection which included Ethnography, Archaeology, Art and Natural History. In reply to questions concerning the collector came stories of foreign travel and adventure that sounded more like fiction than fact.

Brassey is not a well-known character, which is surprising considering her popularity during her life and the large collection of artefacts that she left behind. Today the best memorial to Brassey is the Durbar Hall at Hastings Museum which contains a substantial part of her collection. It has been estimated that about one quarter of Brassey's artefacts are now in Hastings Museum. Taking into account the small amounts of material in various other museums, I would estimate that no more than one third of the original collection has survived. Despite the loss of much of the material, it is still



possible to assess the significance of the collection that was both gathered and displayed by Brassey from the comprehensive catalogues that she produced.

### **Sources of information.**

The main source of information on the Brassey collection comes from the objects themselves; most of the 'scientific' specimens are labelled with the species and site of collection. The catalogues that Brassey made provide extra information on many of the specimens and also describe how they were displayed. The latter reveals clues as to Brassey's intentions in her exhibitions. She did not write the catalogues herself which suggests a certain detachment from the collections and an ability to delegate specialist areas of collection management. A valuable insight into Brassey's collecting is provided by the books which she wrote about her travels around the world, where she sometimes described how she obtained certain specimens. The catalogues themselves refer to pages from Brassey's books, showing an intimate link between the narrative and the objects.

### **Biography.**

In 1839 Anna Allnutt (or Annie as she preferred to be known) was born, the only child of a wealthy wine merchant and jockey, John Allnutt. Her mother Elizabeth (née Harriet) died shortly after she was born. Anna Allnutt lived first with her grandfather, John Allnutt senior, at Clapham. He was an art collector and patron of artists such as Turner and Cox; Anna Allnutt grew up in a collecting household. Later she moved to Grosvenor Place with her father. In 1860 she married Thomas Brassey junior (Figure 1 shows the family tree), the son of the famous railway contractor who was reputed to have built one twentieth of the world's railway lines. The Brassey family were very wealthy: Thomas senior left about five million pounds when he died in 1870. They lived with Thomas Brassey senior at Beauport Park near Hastings, until their new home of Normanhurst Court at Catsfield was built

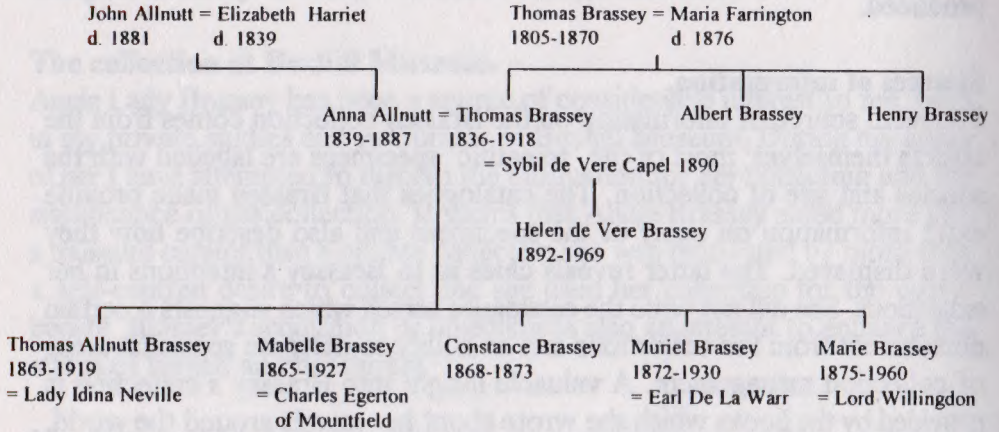


Figure 1. The Brassey family tree



A DRAG ACROSS THE SAND IN A JINRIKISHA.



in 1870. The family also had a town house in London at 24 Park Lane, the present site of the London Hilton.

The Brassey family was actively involved in politics, supporting the Liberal Party. Thomas Brassey contested the Birkenhead election in 1861 and was elected as MP for Devonport in 1865 and Hastings in 1868. Brassey supported her husband's political career by canvassing for him and managing their affairs while he was away.

"It is, of course well-known that Lady Brassey has become quite a power in the world of politics and that many of the most brilliant men in political life are guests at her receptions." (Hastings Library 1)

In 1880 Thomas joined Gladstone's parliament. The Brasseys were personal friends of Gladstone, who, with his cabinet, often visited them at Normanhurst Court and sailed with them on their yacht. Thomas Brassey received a knighthood in 1881 and so Annie Brassey became Lady Brassey. In the same year she was made Dame Chevalier of the Order of St. John and a Knight Companion of the Order of Kapiolani by the King of Hawaii. Thomas became Baron Brassey of Bulkeley in 1886 and Earl Brassey in 1911. Appendix 1 shows the main dates associated with the Brassey family.

On women's suffrage Annie Brassey said:

"I thought women already did govern the world more or less, whereas if we had votes we should probably not have nearly as much power as we now possess without any undue fuss being made about it." (Brassey 1889: 288)

Annie Brassey, like other significant figures of the time, was able to revise

her ideas according to changing influences. By 1911 all the Brassey family were in favour of votes for women. After her death her husband wrote:

“She had too much intelligence not to form a judgement of her own on political issues. Her sympathies were instinctively on the side of the people.” (Brassey 1889: xvi)

Although not of an aristocratic background the Brasseys assumed the role of landed gentry when they moved into Normanhurst Court. The nearby village of Catsfield was said to have been greatly influenced by the benevolence of the Brasseys, who took a keen interest in the welfare of the community. The Brassey's philanthropy stemmed from their religious convictions. Although members of the Church of England they were ecumenical and not extreme or exclusive in their beliefs. In 1892 Baron Brassey as president of the Sunday Society petitioned for the Sunday opening of museums, art galleries and libraries.

The Brasseys came from Cheshire yeoman stock, although they claimed descent from a Norman family. They were ‘new money’ and contrasted sharply with their aristocratic neighbours at Catsfield, the Ashburnham family. The Ashburnhams had an unimpeachable pedigree but had run into financial difficulties by the end of the nineteenth century. I would suggest that one of Brassey's motivations for collecting was to furnish her new stately home with high status objects, instant heirlooms for the *nouveau riche* ‘lord and lady of the manor’.

### **The reasons for Brassey's fame.**

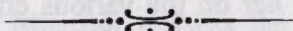
Annie Brassey was most famous for the books that she wrote about her travels around the world on the steam yacht the *Sunbeam*. Sailing was Thomas's pastime; he had owned a yacht since he was at school. Annie Brassey, however, had never been on a boat before she married. Despite



frequent and severe sea-sickness she kept a lively and detailed account of their journeys. These she sent to her father as a series of letters which were at first printed for circulation amongst family and friends; they were later published as books. It was Brassey's third book *A Voyage in the Sunbeam* (published 1878), that established her as a popular author: "She awoke and found herself famous." (Brassey 1889: xix) It was a best-seller; nine editions were published and it was translated into seventeen foreign languages. The 1880 edition was adapted for reading in schools and the 1881 sixpenny 'popular' edition was published as an inexpensive paperback. The *Sunbeam* voyage took place in 1876-77 and was the first ever circumnavigation by steam yacht. The Brasseys travelled with their young family and their pets. The yacht was very large and had a crew of thirty, allowing a surprising degree of comfort on board. The family made many other cruises on the yacht, four of which Brassey wrote books about. The final book describes their last journey together on the *Sunbeam* in 1886-87. The journey was ill-fated; a gentleman who had requested a berth on the *Sunbeam* but who was not well-known to the family committed suicide and Brassey's health was failing. On September 17<sup>th</sup> 1887 Lady Brassey died of malarial fever while the *Sunbeam* was *en route* between Australia and Mauritius; she was buried at sea. The book that she had been writing was published by Thomas in 1889 as *The Last Voyage*.

Brassey was aged only forty eight when she died. She had led an adventurous life which lived up to the Brassey's family motto *Arduis sæpe, metu numquam*, 'Oft in danger, never afraid'.

It was through her books that Brassey was best known but she left another legacy in the form of the extensive collections that she gathered around the world.





## **Chapter 2      The formation & display of the collection.**

One of the main differences between private and public collections is the degree of access to the material. Public collections, in the form of museums, are easily accessible while those of a private collector are usually poorly publicised and difficult to view. Brassey's collection was certainly private, but it was continually on show either at Normanhurst Court and Park Lane, or at temporary exhibitions such as at Hastings in 1885. Access to the collections was actually more difficult in the period 1919-1932, when most of the material was presented to Hastings Museum who had nowhere to put it on display.

### **Brassey's ability to collect - money, mobility & time.**

Brassey was able to collect so extensively because she was very rich, had a number of houses in which to store the material and the ability to travel around the world on the *Sunbeam*. She did not live a life of leisure, however, as she was responsible for managing her estate, assisting with her husband's political career, attending social functions and supporting various charities - in particular, the St. John Ambulance Association. Brassey was extremely hard working, often rising early in the morning and not retiring until late at night. Her energy, despite poor health, was often commented upon by her contemporaries. She was able to organise her own time and seems to have worked as hard on her collecting as she did on her other affairs. Brassey grew up in a collecting environment and was interested in natural history from an early age. Her mobility and resources allowed her to collect, but were not the reason for her collecting.

### **Methods of collecting.**

Most of the objects in Brassey's collection were either purchases or gifts, the majority gathered by her on the various cruises on the *Sunbeam*. Brassey's books are an important source of information on the collection as



she sometimes describes how she acquired material, usually purchased at markets or directly from the indigenous people she met. She was often presented with gifts from the various dignitaries she visited. As Brassey's reputation spread the collection appears to have gathered its own momentum and she was sent unsolicited gifts from around the world. Some specimens were purchased from dealers such as Bryce Wright and Edward Charlesworth.

### **The yacht *Sunbeam*.**

The steam yacht *Sunbeam* was a 'composite three-masted topsail yard screw schooner'. It was 157' long and 27' 6" wide, displaced 531 tons and carried six ship's boats. Without the yacht the nature of the collection would have been very different, as it allowed the Brasseys to travel where they wished and transport large quantities of objects. Items were also displayed on board *The Sunbeam*. The *Hastings Observer* of May 27<sup>th</sup> 1877 reported:

"The yacht was a venerable store of rare and costly, beautiful and grotesque, natural and artificial productions....The whole earth seemed to have been ransacked, and the waters under the earth explored and netted and dredged, for contributions to the treasure house of the *Sunbeam*....The *Sunbeam* will be kept off Hastings over Monday, that all who will may inspect her and the treasures."

During her voyages Brassey often invited the people she met to come on board for a guided tour of the ship and the collections but this was not just restricted to the social élite. When in Madeira Brassey gave a tour for the 'bearers' they had hired, explaining about the objects in Spanish. The *Sunbeam* and part of the collection were often moored off Hastings while not in use and visitors could be rowed over for a shilling. The *Sunbeam* was used as a hospital ship in 1914-18 and was eventually broken up in 1929. The National Maritime Museum possess the *Sunbeam*'s figurehead, a

likeness of Brassey's daughter Constance who died of scarlet fever at the age of five. The figurehead is currently on loan to Hastings Museum. Appendix 2 shows the three main voyages of the *Sunbeam*.

### **Normanhurst Court.**

The Brasseys' country residence was built between 1867-70. It was in the *François Premier* style, resembling a French châteaux and was set in a 3,410 acre landscaped park. Although both Thomas Brassey senior and junior were involved with the design, neither were reported to be happy with the result. It was called Normanhurst Court, probably because the family claimed descent from an invading Norman family and the proximity to Battle.

Normanhurst Court was open to the public on Tuesdays; monetary donations were given to the Hastings Infirmary. By the 1890's a charge of one shilling was made for admissions, which also went to local charities. A printed catalogue was produced in 1878 by Alfred Maskell and updated in 1881. It served as a guide book to the house and collections. The collection was displayed around the house from at least 1878 but by 1888 it was confined to a room described as a 'museum'. The sales particulars of 1920 show a purpose built museum of 20' by 21' in the grounds. This is not shown on the 1873 OS map but appears on the 1908 edition; there is no mention of it in Brassey's catalogues. I suspect that the museum building was constructed shortly after 1890 when Thomas Brassey remarried and that much of Brassey's collection was moved out of the house. This also preserved the collection from a serious fire at the house in 1912.

Normanhurst Court was used as a military hospital in the First World War and the estate was leased by St. Hilary's Girls School in 1920. The house was a billet for troops in the Second World War who severely damaged the building, which was demolished in 1951. A caravan park now occupies the



site, but Brassey's influence is still apparent in the form of the exotic trees and shrubs that grow in the gardens.

### **24 Park Lane - "The Lady Brassey Museum".**

In 1886 the Colonial and India Exhibition was held at the Albert Hall; Thomas Brassey being one of its Commissioners. When the displays were taken down Thomas bought the intricately carved Indian Durbar Hall as a setting for Lady Brassey's collection at their Park Lane home (see appendix 4). The 'Lady Brassey Museum' as it was later known, was open to the public. Shortly after Brassey's death her husband commented:

"We shall miss her in everything, specially in the task of arranging in the museum, now near completion.....One of her objects being to afford instruction and recreation to the members of the Working Men's Clubs, to whom she proposed to give constant facilities of access to the collection." (Brassey 1889: xvi)

It is ironic that Annie Brassey died before the completion of the museum that bore her name. One visitor of the 'Lady Brassey Museum' said "It is a dangerous place to visit unless you are prepared to break the tenth commandment." (Griffith 1894: 523).

### **The Brassey Institute.**

Thomas Brassey became MP for Hastings in 1868 and in 1879 he built the Brassey Institute in the town. The building was Venetian Gothic in style and contained the Brasseys' private apartments, a library, the Hastings School of Science and School of Art. The Art School was used for temporary exhibitions, two of which were held by Annie Brassey in 1881 and 1885 using her collections (see appendix 5). Admission was charged, the proceeds going towards the St. John Ambulance Association. The 1885 exhibition included a display on the Association including Brassey's plans for its local

administration and her suggested first aid kits. School parties were admitted free and provided with transport. Brassey took some of the groups herself. The Brassey Institute now houses Hastings Central Library; six thousand of the books it contains were donated by the Brasseys.

In 1890 the Hastings Museum was founded in the Brassey Institute. Thomas Brassey was its first president and Charles Dawson one of its geological curators. Dawson is regarded as the perpetrator of the Piltdown skull hoax of 1912-1953 and it has been suggested that he used parts of Brassey's collection to construct it. This is unlikely because the collection was not presented until 1919.

### **Other temporary exhibitions.**

Lady Brassey contributed a display towards the International Fisheries Exhibition at South Kensington in 1883. The material was mostly marine biology and a collection of model boats. It was arranged by Bryce Wright who also published the catalogue. Later that year Brassey had her own exhibition at Swansea. In 1884 Brassey exhibited at Penzance; this was also arranged and the catalogue published by Wright. The entrance fees for the exhibition were used towards the construction of a new harbour at Newlyn and over nineteen thousand people visited in the first week. Thus the collection was not just for Brassey's enjoyment but was used as a means of public education and fund-raising for charities.



## **Chapter 3 The dispersal and subsequent display of the collection.**

The collection was retained by the Brassey family until after Earl Brassey's death in 1918. After this the properties in which the collection was housed were sold and the objects dispersed. Although Thomas Brassey and the children assisted with the collection, Lady Brassey was the driving force behind it, nothing having been added to it after her death.

### **Park Lane & Normanhurst Court collections dispersed 1919-20.**

The house at 24 Park Lane was sold in 1919 and the Brassey's only son Thomas Allnutt Brassey, or Tab as he was known, donated the 'Lady Brassey Museum' to the Hastings Corporation. Tab was killed in a road accident later that year, which ended the male Brassey line. In 1920 Lady Mabelle Egerton, the eldest of Brassey's daughters, donated some of the collections there to Bexhill Museum on behalf of her son.

### **Hastings Museum - Ethnography from Park Lane.**

Hastings Museum was founded in 1890 in the Brassey Institute and so was an obvious choice to receive the collections from Park Lane. The material could not be properly displayed until 1932 when the Museum was moved to its present site at John's Place and a special annex built to house the Durbar Hall. The display at Hastings Museum was initially very similar to the 'Lady Brassey Museum' although ethnographic objects from other collections were later added. The display was revised by David Devenish in 1975 and the section on the Brassey family was subsequently re-displayed in 1990.

### **Bexhill Museum - Natural History from Normanhurst Court.**

Bexhill Museum was founded in 1914 and in 1920 received some of the collections from Normanhurst Court (see appendix 6). Most of the material

was natural history and can be matched with displays described in the Normanhurst Court catalogue under 'Geological specimens and other scientific objects'. Bexhill Museum originally specialised in natural history although it has since diversified. Both Lord Brasseys were town mayors between 1907-9 and so there was a strong connection between Bexhill and the Brassey family. The specimens were assimilated into the museum's other collections and were never displayed as a separate entity, as was the case at Hastings Museum; because of this the presence of the Lady Brassey collection at Bexhill Museum was almost forgotten. The museum has a substantial part of the geological collection, shells, a few ethnographic artefacts and a case of birds. Future use of the Brassey material may involve recreating some of the geological displays as they were at Normanhurst Court in 1878.

#### **Other museums & collections with Brassey material.**

In 1889 Thomas Brassey donated some of the archaeological finds from Cyprus to museums at Wolverhampton and Leek. Wolverhampton still has this material and although Leek Museum no longer exists its collections are now in the care of the local authority.

The Huntington Library in California holds seventy of Lady Brassey's photograph albums, which they acquired in 1923-24. Most of these photographs were commercially produced but some were taken by Brassey who was a keen amateur photographer. Brassey's collection of photographs by Colonel Stuart Wortley were recently exhibited at the Huntington Library.

Birmingham Museum now possesses some of Brassey's Colombian gold artefacts which form the core of the Museum's Pre-Columbian collection.

The ethnographer James Hooper possessed some material originally



collected by Brassey. Some artefacts were purchased from Hastings Museum in 1947. The Brassey material included two fish lure hooks, a New Hebridean modelled skull, a New Britain modelled skull mask and a New Ireland carved lintel. It is claimed that Hooper acquired part of the collection when it was being thrown out by a Sussex school. This may have been Normanhurst Court when it was leased by St. Hilary's School.

Hastings Central Library (formerly the Brassey Institute) has copies of most of the books the Brasseys wrote, as well as part of the Brasseys library from Park Lane and Normanhurst Court. There are four albums compiled by Lady Brassey, containing press-cuttings, letters, sketches and photographs. These were donated by Lady Mabelle Egerton in 1921 on behalf of her son. One of the marble statues from Normanhurst Court is now in the Library and another, showing the death of King Harold, is in Grosvenor Gardens at St. Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex.

Hastings Town Hall now holds two paintings that once hung at Normanhurst Court. One is a portrait of Lord Brassey and the other of Lady Brassey. Her portrait was painted by Sir Francis Grant P.R.A.; she is standing next to a horse and two dogs which were painted by Sir Edwin Landseer.

East Sussex Records Office holds five of Lady Brassey's albums along with documents relating to the family. The albums contains photographs of friends and family, sketches and press-cuttings.

### **Reasons for dispersal.**

Why did Brassey's children not maintain the collection? It is possible that they were reacting against their mother's collecting habit and wished to free themselves from the emotional 'baggage' associated with the artefacts. The children had been present on the *Sunbeam* when Brassey died and the

collection may have evoked painful memories. The collection was treated with respect and was entrusted to museums so that it would still be accessible to the public, as Brassey would have wished. All of Brassey's children married into the aristocracy and so combined wealth with 'pedigree'. I have suggested that part of Brassey's desire to collect may be an attempt to gain status through control of cultural artefacts; as the children had secured their social position through matrimony, they would not have needed the collection for this purpose.



TATTOO IN THE TROPICS.



## Chapter 4 The Geological collection.

The geological collection is not the best known, most extensive or best documented collection but it clearly demonstrates her reliance on and association with other subject specialists.

### Summary of the collection & sources.

The geological collection is listed in Brassey's 1878 catalogue and Bexhill Museum's accession register of 1920 shows which specimens were donated. Many of the specimens were mounted on card and had a label onto which the name and geographical location or geological formation were written. The objects were also numbered, in some cases there is evidence of two numbering systems but it is not always clear which were Brassey's own numbers and which are Bexhill Museum's. In a few cases there are references to geological collecting in Brassey's books, but matching these to actual specimens is extremely difficult.

Very little has been written about Brassey's geological collections due to their being hidden away in the stores of Bexhill Museum. It received a brief entry in *World Palaeontological Collections*, and one of the objects was illustrated in *Geology & the Local Museum*. The documentation states that the collection was formed in about 1875, which is prior to the *Sunbeam* circumnavigation. The style of the Bryce Wright labels on some specimens suggests a date of between 1878-1881. The 1878 catalogue lists the collection (although this was revised in 1881) and Brassey mentions collecting certain specimens while on the 1876-77 voyage, in particular lava from Hawaii. This suggests that most of the collection was made between 1875 and 1878. In August 1873 the Geological Section of the British Society went to East Sussex to make boreholes to gauge the depth of the Wealden strata. The Society visited Lady Brassey at Normanhurst Court and they were given a guided tour of the house. The art collection was

commented upon but no mention was made of any geological displays. The Society's visit may have encouraged Brassey's interest in geology.

### **The geological display at Normanhurst Court.**

The material was only ever displayed at Normanhurst Court; it was not used for temporary exhibition or in the 'Lady Brassey Museum'. The arrangement of the geological displays at Normanhurst Court was traditional and based upon geological formation and period, similar to the displays that can still be seen at the Sedgewick Museum in Cambridge. It was an ordered, systematic and didactic display, useful for students and geologists but difficult for non-specialists. This type of display is currently very unfashionable.

Within the case "Rocks, &c." there were a couple of unusual additions to a geological display, for instance "236. Terracotta female head, *Cilicia*." and "240. White Marble. Temple of Victory. *Athens*." (Maskell 1878: 131). Presumably Brassey included these archaeological artefacts to demonstrate the uses of clay and marble in antiquity; the economic uses of natural resources was popular theme in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

### **The surviving collection.**

It does not appear that the entire collection was donated to Bexhill Museum. Appendix 6 shows what geological material now remains. The collection at Bexhill Museum was very badly stored and many of the specimens are water-damaged or have suffered pyrite decay. Labels have become detached or obscured which has made identification difficult. It is possible that more of the collection is at the Museum but is unrecognised. The storage conditions have been improved and a new environmentally controlled store with roller-racking was constructed in 1986.



The material was probably donated because it was seen as relevant to Bexhill Museum's natural history specialisation. It was the most 'museum-like' of the displays at Normanhurst Court as it was carefully arranged and labelled in table cases. The cases in which the collection was displayed were part of the gift to the Museum and these are still in use. In 1920 Bexhill Museum's curator was Rev. Thompson F.G.S., a geologist and he solicited the donation.

### **Purchases & field-collection.**

Most of the specimens were purchased as is demonstrated by the dealers' labels that are still attached. Many of the rocks and minerals have Bryce Wright's labels and so do a few of the fossils. Edward Charlesworth supplied most of the Crag specimens and the reproduction dinosaur bones were purchased from J. Tennant of London.

Brassey's books provide evidence that she field-collected some of the specimens herself. For instance "71. Volcanic ashes or dust, thrown on board the 'Sunbeam' whilst in the *Straits of Magellan*," which corresponds with an incident Brassey describes, "the blackest of clouds came suddenly down on us, and descended on the deck in a tremendous shower - not of rain but of *dust* and *ashes*." (Brassey 1878: 149).

### **Bryce Wright - dealer & zoologist.**

Bryce McMurdo Wright F.Z.S., F.R.G.S. (1850-1895) was a dealer who specialised in, although was not restricted to, mineral specimens. He inherited the business from his father Bryce McMurdo Wright senior (1814-1874) and there has been much historical confusion over the shared business and name. It was Wright junior who was associated with Lady Brassey. No correspondence between Brassey and Wright has survived so it is difficult to know their exact relationship; it seems likely that it was a business rather than a social connection and that Brassey purchased specimens from him.

Bryce Wright became bankrupt in 1887 and died in 1895 aged forty five. It is speculation but Wright's financial problems may be in part due to the early death of Brassey, who left the country in 1886 and died in 1887. Brassey would have been one of Wright's richest clients.

**Edward Charlesworth - palaeontologist & dealer.**

Edward Charlesworth F.G.S. (1813-1893) was a geological curator and dealer. He worked at the Museum of the Geological Society 1837, the Museum of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society 1844-1858, published the *London Geological Journal* between 1846-1847, founded the British Natural History Society in 1848 and was a curator at Ipswich Museum in 1869. He is credited with the introduction of glass-topped boxes for the protection of fragile specimens. The British Natural History Society and the Crag Investigation Fund were both societies that Charlesworth founded; they excavated and distributed sets of palaeontological specimen in return for a subscription. Brassey was probably a member of the Crag Investigation Fund which operated between 1875-1878, because she had a collection of Charlesworth's fossils from that area and of that date. It is known that Charlesworth visited Lady Brassey at Normanhurst Court in October 1877, as there is an account book in library of the Battle Historical Society which records payment for a carriage to collect him from the railway station.

**'Railway cutting' specimens.**

A number of Brassey's geological specimens derived from railway cuttings. It is possible that these were originally collected by her father-in-law as they are from some of the railway lines that he made. In particular there is a specimen of ironstone from Godalming, two of limonite from the railway cutting at Haslemere and an ammonite from the Buriton railway cutting. These sites are all on the London to Portsmouth railway line that Thomas Brassey senior constructed. There are also two specimens of red ochre from a cutting at Crediton, North Devon. If these fossils came from Thomas



Brassey senior then they would be oldest part of the collection, dating from about 1859.

**‘Peak of Teneriffe’ obsidian specimen.**

It is interesting to note the means by which a geological specimen can become a social history artefact. The collection includes a fragment of obsidian with a disproportionately large label (see plate “Specimens at Bexhill Museum” top right corner). The label says “Obsidian from Peak of Teneriffe, “Sunbeam” Saturday July 22<sup>nd</sup> 76”. This specimen was collected by Brassey during her voyage in the *Sunbeam* of 1876-77. Brassey recalls the incident:

“Half-past eight found us in the saddle again, and we commenced to traverse a dreary plain of yellowish white pumice-stone, interspersed with huge blocks of obsidian, thrown from the mouth of the volcano.” (Brassey 1878: 24)

Here is a link between the collection and Brassey’s book; to her the obsidian was both a souvenir of the voyage and a geological specimen.

Lady Brassey was not a geologist and she employed professionals to help her with the collection. Brassey knew her limits and relied on others to cover the gaps in her knowledge, much as a modern museum professional would.



## **Chapter 5 The Ethnographic Collection.**

### **Summary of collection & sources.**

The main sources for information on the ethnographic collections are the catalogues and accession registers that listed the material. It has been estimated that about one third of the total collection was ethnography.

### **The Durbar Hall.**

Ethnography is the best known part of the collection, not just because of the amount of material but also because it has been displayed for the longest period of time. The Durbar Hall at Hastings Museum has been open to the public from 1932 until the present day. It contains many of the artefacts from the 'Lady Brassey Museum' at Park Lane. The Hall itself is part of the collection and provides a unique setting for ethnographic material. The Durbar Hall was only one of two in the country; the other was constructed in 1890 at Osborne House, Queen Victoria's residence on the Isle of Wight. The possession of the only 'non-royal' durbar hall might have been a powerful status symbol and perhaps emphasised the fact that Thomas Brassey was lord-in-waiting to the Queen from 1893-5.

### **The significance of the collection & Brassey's narrative.**

Brassey's material from Oceania is particularly important because there was little other collecting going on there at that time. She was a discerning collector and avoided tourist pieces. The collection is of special interest because it is accompanied by Brassey's narrative in the form of her books, which describe the manner in which she collected. Of the inhabitants of Bow Island in the South Pacific she commented that, "...they might have given a lesson to many civilized people, so gentle, genial, and graceful, yet dignified were their manners." (Brassey 1878: 217) Of reports of violence toward Europeans she says:



"It is still quite a chance how you may be received in some of the islands; for if the visit of the last ship was the occasion of murder, plunder, and ill-treatment of the inhabitants, it should not to be wondered at that the next comers should be received with distrust." (Brassey 1878: 224)

As well as "a bag full of beads, knives, looking-glasses, and pictures, for barter and presents," she took the precaution of carrying a revolver for self defence. (Brassey 1878: 212).

### **Brassey's methods of collecting.**

Lady Brassey was very well travelled, having made a circumnavigation and many other voyages between 1869 and 1887. Access to the objects she collected was therefore relatively easy. She was often presented with gifts by the people she visited on her cruises and some of these found their way into her collection, such as, "922. Rope Charm. Given to Mrs. Brassey by a Bedouin Arab in the Holy Land, 1869.". Some items sent to her from abroad, "681. State Cloak of a South Sea Island Chief. made of tappa.... This cloak was sent to Mrs. Brassey from a chieftainess at Tahiti.". Other objects were purchased directly from their owners; "642. Three Finger Rings. *Trinidad*. Made by coolies. See Lady Brassey's book, 'In the Trades, the Tropics, and the Roaring Forties,' p.165.". "My purchase from the coolie-women on Sir Joseph Needham's estate include a gold necklet..." (Brassey 1885: 165).

There is no evidence that Brassey purchased ethnographic artefacts from dealers in England but the possibility should not be dismissed. Bryce Wright sold ethnographic objects and would have been a convenient source of material for Brassey's collection.

### **Dispersal to Hastings & Bexhill Museum.**

Hastings Museum made extensive use of the ethnographic collection and Durbar Hall which were given to them in 1919. The few ethnographic artefacts that were presented to Bexhill Museum have rarely been displayed. Bexhill Museum contains many unprovenanced ethnographic artefacts which may have come from Brassey's collection (see appendix 6). These are of the correct age, quality and nationality to be Brassey's, but without documentation it is impossible to prove.

### **Feather Cloak.**

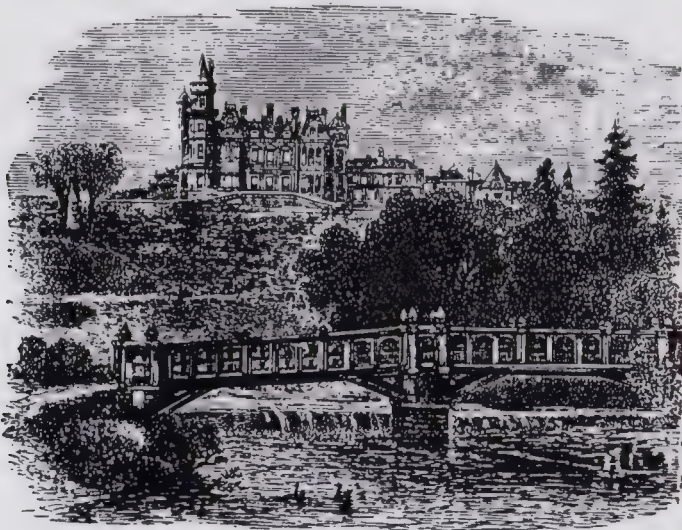
The feather cloak has been described as the most famous and most important exhibit at Hastings Museum. The feather cloak was cleaned and repaired by the British Museum's conservation department in 1990. The cloak is still on display at Hastings Museum. The object had a long history before it was acquired by Brassey. The cloak had belonged to Queen Pomaré of Tahiti; feather cloaks were not made there so it must have been transported from Hawaii. The feather cloak was presented to Sir Thomas Trigge Thompson, who in 1843 had helped to resist French domination of the Society Islands. Thompson died in 1865 and it is not recorded how Brassey acquired the cloak. She usually states when a artefact was a gift so it was probably purchased. The cloak is 5' long, 2' 4" at the neck and 12' at the skirt. It is constructed of 'O'o (*Moho nobilis* - now extinct) and Mamo (*Drepanis pacifica*) bird feathers forming a red diamond-shaped pattern on a yellow background. There were only a few suitably coloured feathers on each bird and so gathering enough was a formidable task. Feather cloaks were extremely rare when Brassey collected her example and it was an very high-status object. The cloaks could only be worn by Hawaiian royalty on certain ceremonial occasions. Brassey was fascinated by the feather cloaks she saw when she was in Hawaii (Brassey 1878: 284,294 & 295) and she described them as being "like the richest velvet or plush, that glitters like gold in the sunlight.....they have a peculiar kind of metallic lustre, quite



independent of their brilliant colour.”

King Kalakaua of Hawaii (the country’s last king) visited Brassey at Normanhurst Court in 1881 and was reported to be very impressed by the cloak and promised to trace its history for her. Kalakaua was at that time trying to construct a new feather cloak for Queen Kapiolani and was offering a bounty of a dollar for each 'O'o or Mamo feather collected.

The Ethnographic collection reflected Brassey’s interest in non-European cultures and included many high status objects, especially artefacts associated with royalty.



HOME AT LAST

## Chapter 6 Natural History - biological collections.

Classification was a preoccupation of the late nineteenth-century. Brassey was familiar with taxonomic classification through her knowledge of botany and would have been influenced by the ideas of scientists such as Linnaeus, Cuvier and Darwin.

### Summary of collection & sources.

There were numerous biological specimens in Brassey's collection in the form of taxidermy, shells and corals. Most of the Brassey's surviving natural history collections are at Bexhill Museum although there are a few pressed-plant specimens in one of the albums at Hastings Library. Apart from one case of mounted birds at Bexhill Museum the collection is undocumented. To identify the Brassey material, one is left to rely on the style of labels on the artefacts and comparison with the original catalogues.

### Shell collection.

The conchological collection was generally thought to have been lost until the summer of 1995. Closer examination of the material at Bexhill Museum revealed similarities between the labels on Brassey's fossil collection and those on some of the shells. The style of the printed labels is identical and they are filled-out in a similar, if not the same, hand. Confirmation came when the data on the labels was checked against the Normanhurst Court catalogue and the specimens were found to match. The handwriting and labels are probably Bryce Wright's, although it appears that the specimens were field-collected by Brassey rather than purchased in England. The collection sites recorded for the shells match those visited by the *Sunbeam* in the 1876-7 voyage.

The entire conchology collection at Bexhill Museum consists of about 1500 lots, of which 122 are now known to be Brassey's. Dr. Chatfield has





**The Durbar Hall**



Annie Lady Brassey





**Normanhurst Court**



*The Sunbeam*





suggested that most of exotic shells, of which there are nearly 1100 lots, may be from Brassey's collection. This is based on the quality of the collection and the dominance of Indo-Pacific material.



### **Coral collection.**

Brassey's coral collection has not been located. It is possible that some of the material was deposited at Bexhill Museum along with the shells. The corals at Bexhill Museum were accessioned and given numbers prefixed with 'AN' presumable standing for anthozoa; no corresponding accession register has been found.

Most of the specimens were collected by Brassey on her voyages, either purchased at markets or gathered from reefs. While in the Bahamas Brassey employed local divers to collect coral and sponge specimens that she pointed out.

In 1882 Bryce Wright published a paper on two new species and one new genus of coral that he had identified in the collection. These were *Distichopora brasseyi*, *Distichopora allnutti* and *Brasseyia radians*. Wright arranged Brassey's display at the International Fisheries Exhibition of 1883 and included these new corals. An anonymous writer criticised the taxonomy as a "travesty of science". Wright wrote back defending his work but in 1884 John Quelch of the British Museum (Natural History) joined the debate claiming *Distichopora brasseyi* and *allnutti* were synonymous with *Distichopora nitida*. This view was confirmed in 1959 and in 1943 the genus *Brasseyia* was reclassified as *Dendrophyllia*. Wright stood by his new species and included *Distichopora brasseyi* in the 1885 Hastings exhibition. Wright's type specimens have not been located.

Another coral collected by a crew member on the Sunbeam's 1876-7 voyage was published by Charles Stewart F.L.S. as a new species, *Stylaster stellulatus*.

### **Botanical specimens.**

Without the books Brassey wrote it might be assumed that her main interest



was ethnography, but botany was her real passion.

“The continual description of vegetation may be a little wearisome and provocative of ‘skipping’, but, skipped or unskipped, I cannot help breaking into rhapsodies of admiration of the flora of the Tropics. There is a French proverb....when you are with wolves you must needs howl.” (Brassey 1885: 259)

She started to study plants at an early age and a friend used to send her tropical ferns from Jamaica which she took to the British Museum “to be named and classified” (Brassey 1885: 234). Her botanical knowledge allowed her to make detailed and accurate descriptions of the plants she encountered on her voyages. Brassey was a friend of Marianne North whose botanic paintings can still be seen at the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew. There are two letters from Brassey at Kew, regarding a living specimen of *Cytinus hypocistus* that she sent them. There is no herbaria in the Brassey collection, which is surprising but its role may have in part been taken by the plants she cultivated in the grounds of the Normanhurst estate. Apart from the specimen conifers that might be expected in a park of that period there were more exotic plants, such as palm trees, one of which still grows on the site. Brassey visited botanical gardens throughout the world and was often presented with cut-flowers, fruit and seeds. Exotic plants’ roots were dug up with the intention of planting them in England.

### **Animals - pets and exhibits.**

Butterflies and birds were caught and killed for display during the voyages of the *Sunbeam*. The collection once included a stuffed polar bear, pangolin and a duck-billed platypus. Brassey also collected living animals on her travels, most of which would be better described as pets than specimens. Many did not survive the long journeys on the *Sunbeam* or could not tolerate the Sussex climate and so were mounted to become part of the

collection. There was an aviary at Normanhurst Court and ostriches were kept in the grounds. Brassey loved dogs and horses. "950. Dog (Stuffed). 'Vic,' a favourite terrier" and "959. Horse's Tail. Tail of 'Delight', a favourite horse" were displayed at Normanhurst Court. There was a pets' graveyard in the grounds; some of the tombstones are now at Hastings Museum. Brassey was fascinated by the natural world and sought to share her enthusiasm with others through her collection.



THE PET MANIS.



## Chapter 7 Other collections.

Brassey's own personal interests seem to have been subordinate to the overall collection and very few subject areas were neglected. The collection included ethnography, archaeology, social history, ceramics, fine art, furniture, natural history and geology. Brassey also had a collection of model boats; one is now at the National Maritime Museum and another at Hastings Museum.

### Archaeology.

Classical archaeology was more evident in the collection than European. There were Marbles from Ephesus, plaster reproductions of the Elgin marbles, ceramics from Pompeii and ancient Egyptian grave goods. There is little British prehistory, possibly be due to the perception that it was of low status and 'barbaric'. Considering the diversity of the collection, British stone tools are conspicuous by their absence, especially considering that the nearby Sussex Downs were a rich source of neolithic implements. In 1881 some querns from a barrow in Orkney were added to the collection.

Brassey had three Viking oars that were excavated from a barrow in Jutland. A longboat was also found in the barrow and a replica was built and used as a launch on the *Sunbeam*. The boat, the *Ellida*, sank in Loch Carron in 1884. Brassey's interest in the excavation appears more nautical than archaeological.

There was also part of a hoard of Saxon coins, which was thought to have been cached prior to the Battle of Hastings. The collection of these coins may have been an attempt to reinforce links with Brassey's supposed Norman ancestors, rather than a serious interest in Saxon archaeology. Other coins in the collection include a gold half-angel of Henry VI found near Bulkeley and a silver coin found near Normanhurst Court, both places

being associated with the Brassey family.

The collection of Colombian gold artefacts has already been mentioned. These were high status objects of precious metal from royal graves. There was a fully illustrated catalogue of this collection; no other groups of artefacts received such thorough documentation.

In 1884 Brassey funded an archaeological excavation at Curium (now Kourion) in Cyprus. The dig was supervised by Colonel Falkland Warren, Chief Secretary to the government and Honorary Keeper of the Cyprus Museum. In return for her support Brassey was sent many of the finds for her museum.

### **Art collection.**

A number of the paintings at Normanhurst Court came from the Allnutt collection and included works by Constable, Landseer and Turner. Most of the other paintings were of members of the family or landscapes. Thomas Brassey possessed a collection of engravings by Raphael Morghen which Alfred Maskell published as a separate catalogue in 1882.

### **Photograph collection.**

Most of the photographic collection is now in the Huntington Library in California. Brassey took photographs herself as well as collecting those of others and hers are recognisable by their poor quality (personal communication with Jennifer Watts, Curator of Historical Photographs, Huntington Library). In particular Brassey collected the work of Colonel Stuart Wortley (1832-1890) an amateur but highly accomplished and innovative photographer. Wortley specialised in photographing the sea and sky, subjects which would have appealed to Brassey's maritime tastes.



### Albums and souvenirs.

One of the albums at Hastings Library is particularly significant; 'Miscellaneous Vol.1, Rochester to Honolulu' includes photographs, drawings and artefacts relating to the 1876-77 *Sunbeam* voyage. Some of the pressed specimens it contains are commented upon in Lady Brassey's book *A Voyage in the Sunbeam*, including feathers, ferns and the wing of a flying fish. The album provides a companion to Brassey's book and was displayed at Normanhurst Court. Other personal items were displayed as part of the collection, such as Lord Brassey's medals and Lady Brassey's certificate from the National Training School of Cookery. The inclusion of these items may be due to dual role of Normanhurst Court as the Brassey's home and a display area; the line between the collection and their personnel effects was blurred, if indeed it existed at all.

Although I have emphasised Brassey's use of high status cultural objects it would not be true to suggest that she was ashamed of her family's industrial and mercantile background. The Brassey Testimonial Shield, which was presented to Thomas Brassey senior in recognition of his many engineering works, was displayed with pride, as well as busts of Joseph Paxton and George Stephenson.



## Chapter 8 The motivation behind Brassey's collecting.

### Influences on Brassey's life.

It could be argued that Brassey's desire to collect was a response to personal traumas. Collecting may have been a substitute for losses in her own life. Brassey's mother died soon after she was born. She was an only child and was privately educated away from other children. Brassey collected botanical specimens from an early age and was surrounded by her grandfather's extensive library and art collection. Collecting was a very fashionable pastime in late nineteenth-century, as was visiting exhibitions. The Great Exhibition of 1851 marked the beginning of an era of great interest in curiosities.

Brassey suffered severe burns at the time when she 'came out' into society. During her six months recovery period she was unable to feed herself. This trauma may have created a need to be in control of her environment, something that collecting is supposed to offer. Her health was never strong and she suffered from frequent attacks of bronchitis, neuralgia and sea-sickness. The reason stated for many of the voyages was Brassey's health as the cold and wet English winters aggravated her bronchitis. This strategy was not without risks and in 1869 Brassey contracted malaria while in Syria and nearly died. She suffered subsequently from regular relapses. Brassey had an injured arm which sometimes made it difficult to write and her handwriting was very hard to decipher; most of her letters were written by a secretary and signed by her.

Brassey's daughter Constance Alberta Brassey died in 1873 and the following year the *Sunbeam* was built with an image of her as the figurehead. The long voyage of 1876-7 may have been an attempt by Lady Brassey to get over the death of her daughter.

She was very well read and had a particular interest in travel and voyages of discovery. One of Brassey's books was dedicated to "navigators and explorers", some of whom she lists, including Drake, Columbus, Cook and Darwin. Brassey seems to have been particularly influenced by the voyages of Captain Cook (1728-1779) and may have seen herself as travelling in his footsteps. There were some artefacts associated with Cook in Brassey's collection, including some of the weapons used by the Hawaiian tribe who killed him and a collection of original ethnographic and natural history drawings by Thomas Davies who accompanied Cook in 1776. These are now at Hastings Museum. Brassey contributed artefacts to the centenary exhibition of Cook's death held by the Société de Géographie in Paris, 1879.

### **Collecting to gather status.**

High status objects from around the world filled Normanhurst Court; "1237. Bracelet. Gold, enamel and diamonds. Given to Mrs. Brassey by the Maharajah of Johore.". Royalty, politicians and ambassadors were all entertained at the house, some of whom donated objects or sent signed photographs which were added to the collection. Normanhurst Court was not an ancestral family mansion but a large and very new building when the Brasseys moved into it in 1870. There had been no time for family heirlooms to build up to fill the house and this role may have been fulfilled by Brassey's collections instead.

The background of the Brasseys was sometimes called into question. A satirical poem was written about Thomas Brassey when he became a baron (*St. James Gazette*, August 1886) and letters were sent to *The Ancestor* magazine in 1902-3 debating the family's pedigree.

There are still stories told in Catsfield about the rivalry between the Brasseys and Ashburnhams, such as the Ashburnhams building labourers'



cottages in their estate on a ridge so to be visible from Normanhurst Court. The truth behind the stories is hard to find - certainly there is no contemporary documentary evidence of a feud. The description of the entrance hall of Normanhurst Court includes "5. Stag's Head....notice-able from the curious malformation....of one of the antlers....From Lord Ashburnham's park.". Whether this was intended as an insult to the Ashburnhams or was merely a curiosity is open for interpretation. The Ashburnhams had their own taxidermy collection in the Bird Room at Ashburnham Place, consisting mainly of birds shot on the estate. A large part of this collection is now at Bexhill Museum.

Brassey was not obsessed by her collection and her books make it clear that she was more interested in people and places than objects. The collection is systematic as it was gathered with the intention of making a museum but it does have some features of a souvenir collection, providing a reminder of places she visited and people she met. Whilst it may be true that no one is interested in other people's souvenir this is not the case with Brassey's collection which was almost used as the 'theme park' for her voyages; for instance the displays at Normanhurst Court included a reconstruction of the quarter-deck of the *Sunbeam* and an artificial grotto.

Brassey enjoyed the fame that her books brought:

"It is a curious and at the same time a gratifying feeling to find oneself and ones belongings so well known in all parts of the world." (Brassey 1885: 304)

In her later cruises Brassey took copies of *A Voyage in the Sunbeam* with her to distribute to schools, hospitals and lighthouses. Ships, pieces of music and even a gold nugget and lode were named after, or dedicated to, Lady Brassey.

**Brassey as a curator.**

I have suggested that Brassey acted like a museum curator in the way she managed her collections because of the standards of documentation, use of subject specialists and her commitment to public access. Brassey realised the educational potential of her collection, especially to schools and working men's clubs. In one of Brassey's albums there is a cutting from a newspaper of 1885 which comments:

"Lady Brassey has given another instance of her philanthropy and desire to instruct and entertain the people of Hastings....by exhibiting to the public gaze curiosities and articles which she thinks likely to instruct the mind and improve the taste for knowledge."

Although paternalistic these are sentiments that most curators would still recognise. Collections tend to conform to gender stereotypes, Brassey's collection is an exception because of its diversity; including weapons, models and systematically arranged natural history specimens.

**Comparison with Pitt-Rivers.**

General Pitt-Rivers was one of Brassey's contemporaries and with whom there are certain parallels. Both collected extensively and had a particular interest in ethnography, they set up their own museums and opened their houses and grounds to the public. There is no evidence that Brassey and Pitt-Rivers ever met but they did both contribute artefacts to an exhibition held in London. Both Brassey and Pitt-Rivers purchased artefacts from Bryce Wright. The collection of General Pitt-Rivers is much better known than that of Brassey and is famous for his use of typological (a word invented by Pitt-Rivers) ordering of artefacts to demonstrate his theory that material culture evolved in a similar way to the natural selection of plants and animals. This idea is no longer held to be true.

Brassey's collection is about her voyages and her family and there does not appear to be any single ideology or theory that she wished to demonstrate through the material. There is no mention of the theory of evolution, though Darwin is often quoted in the catalogues although in reference to ethnographic rather than natural history matters. Brassey may have been attempting to avoid controversy over the evolution debate.

### **The collection as a shrine to Brassey after her death.**

Brassey had been collecting right up to the time that she died, after which Earl Brassey completed the relevant documentation for the new acquisitions and finished the preparations to the 'Lady Brassey Museum'. No new material was added to the collection but it continued to be curated. It had become a shrine to the memory of Lady Brassey and was not dispersed to museums until after Earl Brassey died.

### **Conclusion.**

It is not possible to separate Brassey from the collection; she made it famous and not the reverse. Brassey's journeys created the unifying link between disparate objects and the books she wrote continued that connection. The collection, like Brassey's books, allowed people to share her voyages around the world; the books described the events and the objects made them tangible.

Brassey wished to share her interests with others and was not an introverted, self-obsessed collector. Personal trauma may have encouraged her tendency to collect but it was the medium through which her philanthropy was expressed and not an end in itself. She wanted to educate and cultivate the tastes of those who visited her exhibitions and her motivation was philanthropic, rather than ideological or theoretical. Brassey did not prescribe a single message which visitors were meant to receive. Public display was not a means of justifying her collecting but the reason for



it: she appears as concerned with the public as she was with the collection. This is the attitude of a curator rather than a private collector.

### Annie Lady Brassey

What began as a research project to support a geological collection developed into a much broader social history study. This text has concentrated on Annie Lady Brassey's collecting and there are still many other aspect of her life which are ripe for further investigation.



SHIPWRECKED CREW COMING ON BOARD.

## Appendix 1. List of dates relating to Lady Brassey and her collection.

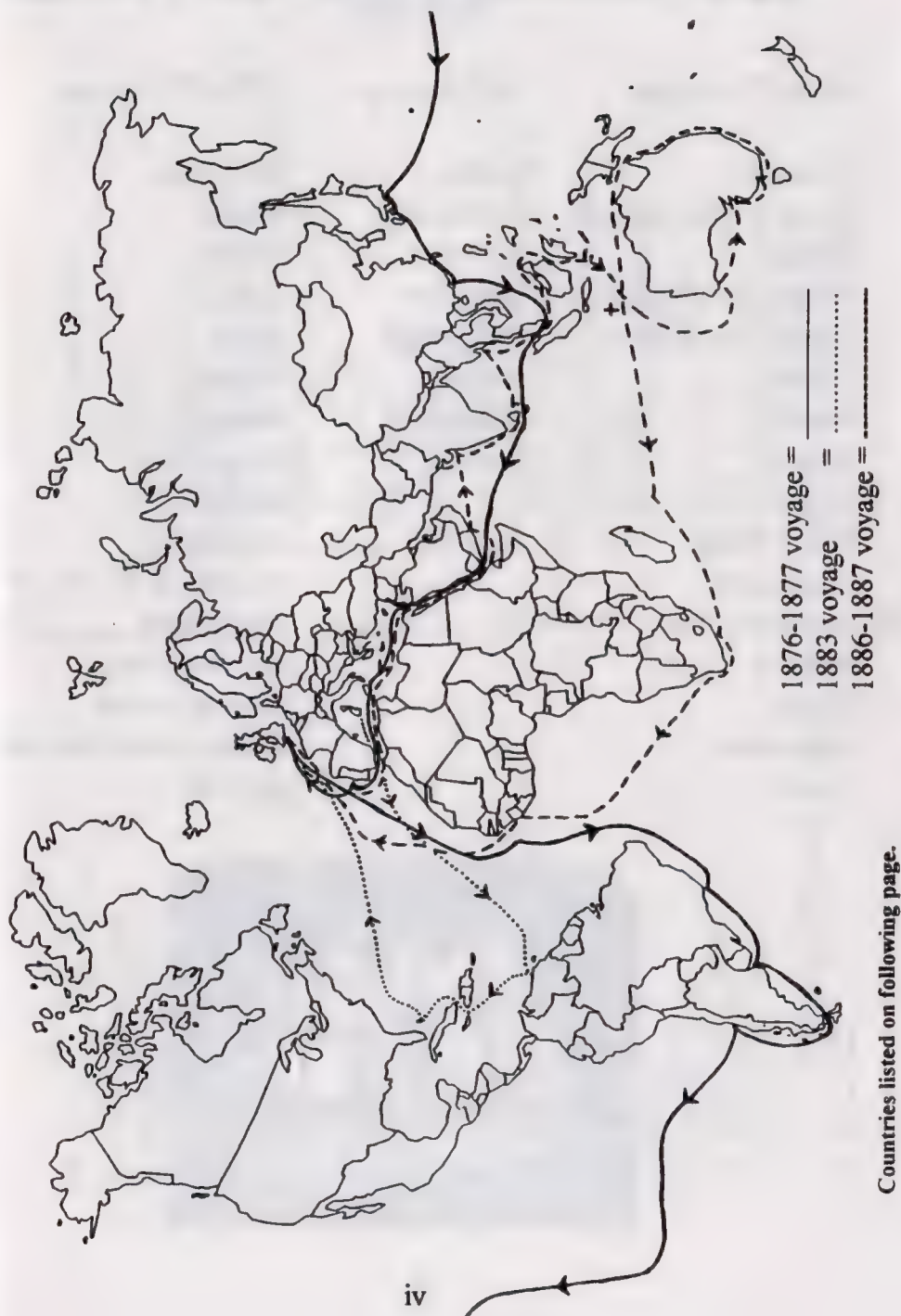
- 1805 Thomas Brassey sr. born.
- 1831 Thomas Brassey sr. marries Maria Farrington (née Harrison).
- 1835 Thomas Brassey sr. wins Stafford railway contract
- 1836 Thomas Brassey jr. is born at Stafford.
- 1839 Anna Allnutt (Lady Brassey) is born.  
Anna's mother dies.
- 1843 Sir Thomas Trigge Thompson is given the Hawaiian feather cloak.
- 1844-1848 Thomas Brassey sr. builds 5 French railways, 3 lines in Scotland & 2 in England.
- 1850 Thomas Brassey sr. moved to Beauport Park, Hastings.
- 1851 Thomas Brassey sr. Finishes Great Northern Railway.  
Brassey Testimonial Shield exhibited at The Great Exhibition.
- 1852 Thomas Brassey sr. works in Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy & Prussia. Helps with the construction of Aswan Dam and Great Trunk Railway of Canada.
- 1853-1857 Thomas Brassey sr. made 6 railways, one over the Alps, others in Turkey, India, the East Indies and Australia. Builds the first railway in South America.
- 1854 Thomas Brassey sr. buys land on the south coast of England.
- 1859 Thomas Brassey sr. completes Portsmouth Line.  
Thomas Brassey jr. graduated from Oxford. MA in law & history.  
[Publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.]
- 1860 Lady Brassey (nee. Annie Allnutt) marries Thomas Brassey jr. They go to live at Beauport Park.
- 1861 Thomas Brassey jr. contests election at Birkenhead.
- 1863 Thomas Allnutt Brassey (TAB) born.
- 1865 Thomas Brassey jr. becomes MP for Devonport.  
Mabelle Brassey born
- 1865-1870 Normanhurst Court built at Catsfield, nr. Battle for the Brasseys to live in.
- 1866 Thomas Brassey jr. called to the bar.
- c1866 Thomas Brassey sr. retires.
- 1868 Thomas Brassey jr. becomes MP for Hastings.
- 1868 Constance Alberta Brassey born  
Thomas Brassey sr. has a stroke.
- 1869 Annie Brassey visits Egypt & contracts malaria in Syria.  
Annie Brassey publishes "*The Flight of the Meteor*".
- 1870 Thomas Brassey sr. dies. He was worth five million pounds.
- 1872 Annie Brassey publishes "*A Cruise in the Eothen*".  
Muriel Brassey born.  
Thomas goes to America, Annie hosts 'Fancy Ball' at Normanhurst.  
Geological Section of British Association visit Normanhurst.
- 1873 Constance Brassey dies of scarlet fever aged 5.
- 1873 Thomas Brassey receives his Competency as Master certificate.

- 1874 The steam yacht *Sunbeam* is built.  
Brasseys go to the Mediterranean.
- 1875 Date given for collection of Annie Brassey's British palaeontology specimens.  
Annie Brassey lays foundation stone for Central Methodist Church, Hastings (demolished 1980).  
Marie Adelaide Brassey ('Baby') born.
- 1876-1877 "The Voyage in the *Sunbeam*", first ever circumnavigation by steam yacht.
- 1876 Maria Brassey (Thomas Brassey sr.'s wife) dies.
- 1877 Edward Charlesworth visits Normanhurst Court. 18<sup>th</sup> October.
- 1878 Publication of the catalogue of the Brassey collection.  
Annie Brassey publishes "*The voyage in the Sunbeam*".  
Brasseys visit Malta & Constantinople on *Sunbeam*.
- 1879-1880 Thomas Brassey president of Statistical Society.
- 1880 Annie Brassey publishes "*Sunshine and Storm in the East*".  
Thomas Brassey joins Gladstone's parliament.
- 1880-1884 Thomas Brassey made a civil lord of the Admiralty.
- 1881 Voyage to Mediterranean  
John Allnutt dies  
Thomas Brassey receives knighthood.  
Annie Brassey made Dame Chevalier of St. John.  
Hastings exhibition.  
King of Hawaii visits Normanhurst.
- 1881 Brassey's visit Shetland Islands.  
Additional Brassey catalogue published.  
Brassey Institute opened.
- 1882 Lady Annie Brassey publishes "*Tahiti*".
- 1883 South Kensington, Hastings & Swansea exhibitions.  
*Sunbeam* cruise to West Indies.  
Working Men's Club & Institute Union's excursion to Normanhurst, August 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 1884 Lady Brassey's excavations at Kourium, Cyprus by Colonel Warren.  
Penzance exhibition.
- 1885 Lady Annie Brassey publishes "*In the Trades, Tropics and Roaring Forties*" and  
"St. John Ambulance Association - Its Work and Objects".  
Gladstone goes on a cruise to Norway in the *Sunbeam*.  
Death of General Gordon, Annie writes to his widow
- 1886 Gladstones's Home Rule Bill.  
Thomas Brassey loses his seat in the Commons.  
Thomas Brassey becomes a Peer, Baron Brassey of Bulkeley.  
Colonial and Indian Exhibition, South Kensington. Durbar Hall.  
TAB becomes a Liberal M.P.  
Colonial Garden Party at Normanhurst.
- 1886-1887 "The Last Voyage" of the *Sunbeam*.
- 1887 Sept 14. Lady Brassey dies, buried at sea *en route* from Australia to Mauritius.



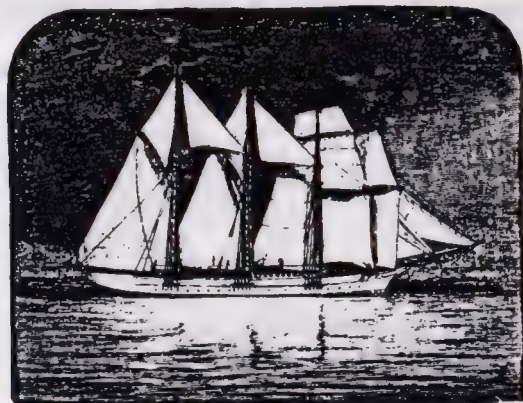
- 1888 Mabelle marries Charles Egerton of Mountfield.  
Baron Brassey gives some Cypriot pottery to Wolverhampton Museum.
- 1889 Baron Brassey publishes "*The Last Voyage*".  
TAB marries Lady Idina Nevill.
- 1890 Baron Brassey marries Sybil de Vere Capel.
- 1890-1928 Brassey Institute used as Hastings Museum.
- 1891 Muriel marries Viscount Cantelupe - later 8th Earl De La Warr.
- 1892 Helen de Vere Brassey born.  
Marie marries Freeman Thomas (later Lord Willingdon).
- 1893 The *Sunbeam* visits West Indies.
- 1894 Lord Brassey made chairman of the Royal Commission on Opium.
- 1893-1895 Lord Brassey made Lord-in-waiting to Queen Victoria.
- 1895 Lord Brassey becomes Governor of Victoria, Australia.
- 1902 Muriel divorces Earl De La Warr.
- 1906 Lord Brassey gives Bexhill its gold mayoral chain.
- 1907 Lord Brassey granted the freedom of Bexhill & elected Mayor 1907-8.
- 1908 Lord Brassey made Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.  
TAB elected Mayor of Bexhill 1908-9.
- 1911 Lord Brassey made an Earl.  
Earl Brassey hands Normanhurst over to TAB.  
*Sunbeam* open to the public off of Hastings pier.  
Brasseys support suffragette movement.
- 1912 Fire destroys part of Normanhurst Court.  
TAB becomes Liberal MP for Hastings.
- 1914-1918 Normanhurst and Park Lane used as hospitals.
- 1916 Sybil de Vere Brassey has a fall on the *Sunbeam*, made permanently lame.  
The *Sunbeam* used as a hospital ship.
- 1918 Earl Brassey dies.
- 1919 Brassey collections given to the Hastings Corporation by TAB.  
TAB killed in road accident in London.
- 1920 Normanhurst Estate leased to St. Hilary's School for Girls.  
Lady Brassey's geology collection given to Bexhill Museum by Lady Mabelle Egerton.
- 1921 Hastings Library given four Brassey albums by Lady Egerton.
- 1923-4 Huntington Library acquires Brassey's photograph albums.
- 1929 The *Sunbeam* is broken up.
- 1931-1936 Marie (Lady Willingdon) becomes Vicereine of India.
- 1932 The Brassey collection was displayed in a new annex of Hastings Museum.
- 1934 Sybil de Vere Brassey dies.
- 1951 Lady Idina Brassey dies.  
Normanhurst Court demolished.
- 1958 Hastings Museum sells Colombian gold, some bought by Birmingham Museum.
- 1969 Helen de Vere Brassey dies.

## Appendix 2. Map of the three main *Sunbeam* voyages.



## Appendix 2 continued. List of countries visited by the *Sunbeam*.

1876-77 voyage	1883 voyage	1886-87 voyage
Madeira	Malta	Gibraltar
Cape Verde Islands	Gibraltar	Malta
Brazil	Madeira	Egypt
Straits of Magellan	Trinidad	Arabia
Tierro Del Fuego	Venezuela	India
Chile	Jamaica	Ceylon
Tahiti	Bahamas	Burma
Hawaii	Azores	Singapore
Japan		Borneo
Hong Kong		Australia
Singapore		[Death of Brassey]
Ceylon		Mauritius
Arabia		South Africa
Egypt		Sierra Leone
Gibraltar		Cape Verde Islands
Spain		Azores





# Appendix 3. Pages from the 1878 Normanhurst Catalogue.

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## Upper Gallery.

274. *Pecten* (?). *Specimen*.
275. *Inoceramus concentricus*.
276. *Trigonia ingens*. *Teddy*.
277. *Balanites minutus*. *Specimen*.
278. " *atanuata*. *Specimen*.
279. *Meyria ornata*. *Specimen*.
280. *Serpula*. *Specimen*.
281. Tooth of fish. *Specimen*.

## WEALDEN.

282. Plant remains. *Beitle*.
283. " " *Beitle*.
284. " " *Barroash*.
285. *Faludina elongata*. *Perbeck*.
286. " " *Perbeck*.
287. *Cyclas*, sp. *Beitle*.
288. " with fish scale. *Beitle*.
289. Annelid markings (?). *Beitle*.
290. Teeth of *Hyodus*. *Beitle*.
291. " *Lepidodus mantelli*. *Beitle*.
292. Scales of *Lepidodus mantelli*. *Beitle*.
293. " *Lepidodus mantelli*.
294. Casts of bones, &c., of large reptiles from the *Sassar Weald*, *Tilgais Forest*.
295. Phalange of *Hylosaurus*.
296. Tooth of *Iguanodon mantelli*.
297. Ungual bones, fore and hind claws, of *Iguanodon mantelli*.
298. Tooth of crocodile.
299. Bones of crocodile.
300. Tooth of crocodile (*Goniatitis crassidens*).

## OOLITE.

301. Wood. Oxford clay.
302. Wood.
303. Wood.
304. *Terebratula maxillata*. Inf. oolite. *Gloucester*.
305. " globata. Inf. oolite. *Gloucester*.
306. " lagenalis. Inf. oolite. *Gloucester*.
307. " sp. Inf. oolite. *Gloucester*.
308. " simplex. Inf. oolite. *Lockhampton*.
309. " carinata. Inf. oolite. *Lockhampton*.

## Upper Gallery.

238. *Ammonites tuberculatus*. *Folkestone*.
239. " *denarius*. *Folkestone*.
240. *Hamites rotundus*. *Folkestone*.
241. " spinatus. *Folkestone*.
242. " *intermedius*. *Folkestone*.
243. *Scalpellum arcuatum*. *Folkestone*.
244. *Corytes Stokewi*. *Folkestone*.
245. *Elymus Martini*. *Folkestone*.
246. *Ichthyos (Jaw)*. *Folkestone*.
247. *Hemistaster Bailyi*. *Folkestone*.

## NEOCOMIEN.

248. *Ventriculites*. *Isle of Wight*.
249. *Holocorys elegans*. *Atherfield*.
250. *Terebratella pectita*. *Centbridge*.
251. *Rhyrchonella Gibbsi*. *Isle of Wight*.
252. *Terebratula biplicata*. *Cambridge*.
253. *Myacites* (?).
254. *Panopæa plicata*.
255. *Cyprina*, sp. *Atherfield*.
256. *Jocardia* (?).
257. *Cyprina* (var) *Cytheron*.
258. " *Angulata*. *Atherfield*.
259. *Thracia minor*. *Sandown*.
260. *Thracia* (?).
261. *Gervillia acrota*. *Atherfield*.
262. *Trigonia caudata*. *Hyke*.
263. " *dentata*. *Atherfield*.
264. *Cocculites* (?).
265. *Exogyra* (?).
266. " *erythraea*.
267. *Pecten asper*. *Hornimaster*.
268. *Ammonites Deshayesi*. *Atherfield*.
269. *Salenia petalifera*. *Wills*.
270. *Hoplaphys longimana*. *Lyme Regis*.
271. *Polyodon*.

## YORKSHIRE NEOCOMIEN.

272. *Arca* (?). *Specimen*.
273. *Cardium*. *Specimen*.

# Appendix 4. Pages from the Park Lane catalogue, c.1888.

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the arcade itself being ceiled with panels of geometrical design all different in pattern. The designs are formed of numberless little pieces (tongued and grooved and fitted together almost like a puzzle. The fronts of the cases surrounding the gallery are London work. Between each pair of pillars hangs a Moorish lamp, a basin of blue and white pottery suspended by four brass chains.

Passing round the museum, from left to right, the following numbers refer to the glazed openings, and are for the most part taken in order from the top to the bottom of each opening.

1. **PERSONAL SOUVENIRS OF LADY BRASSEY—REMINISCENCES OF VOYAGES, ETC.**—Mule bells and tent bells from Syria—horse shoes, camel shoes—a relic of old New South Wales—bread from Portland prison—lock of Queen Pomaré's hair—mosaics from Saint Sophia—wooden drinking bowl presented to Mr. Gladstone by farmers in Norway ("Sunbeam" cruise, 1887)—mizen throat halyard block of "Sunbeam" after voyage round the world, nearly worn through—remains of objects lent to the Japanese Exhibition and burnt in the fire there—souvenirs of the Commune.

2. **BORNIO, BURMAH, AND THE STRAITS.**—Collection of weapons used by the Dyak "head-hunters"—decorated sheaths and trophies of human hair—scepters or blow-pipes (on ceiling of arcade): quivers of poisoned darts for the same—nest of globular lacquered boxes (India)—native (Indian) glass—bangles and armlets of brass (Borneo)—curious ear-rings—gutta-serpa as brought from the forests—rhinoceros horns—alligator's eggs—edible birds' nests prepared for soup making—nest of the bird, containing an egg—boxes for containing lime used in betel chewing by Malays—begging boxes carried by priests—peasant glass vessels from Fama, Bengal.

3. **ORIENTAL ARMS.**—Helmet and coat of mail (India)—quoits used by Sikhs in warfare and worn on the turban—claw knuckledusters—japanese, Cingalese, and other swords.

4. **SPECIMENS FROM AUSTRALIAN AND OTHER MINES.**—Opals in the matrix from Durgoo river, Cooper's Creek, West Queensland—cat's-eyes, moonstones, etc. (Ceylon)—quartz with crystalline gold from Queensland mines, principally Mount Morgan—model of a large nugget—nuggets and fine gold obtained by panning out—crushed quartz in various conditions of refining processes—pearls from Australian pearl fisheries.

In the lower part of the case a few specimens from the hot "White Terrace," New Zealand, recently destroyed by earthquake, and, below, a number of objects recovered in 1886 from the Dutch ship "Jan Thomas," wrecked in Table Bay at end of last century.

5. **INDIAN JEWELLERY AND BRASS AND SILVERSMITHS' WORK.**—Fine dagger with coloured stones openworked in blade—elephant goad from Jeypore—quiver or mobile stone (a flexible sandstone).

6. **POTTERY AND PORCELAIN OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES.**—Tea set of native unglazed pottery from Shetland Isles—Fiji pottery (now scarce)—plates of Chinese porcelain with Mahomedan magic square.

7. **ETHNOLOGICAL (EXCEPT SOUTH SEAS).**—South American spruce and bits, lassos and hobbles—Patagonian spurs—Fuegian skin cup and pipe—model of Chinese lady's foot and shoe.

*Jumbled together: cells and calumels,  
Claymores and menzies, dyis in lanes, fens  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rearsies,  
Laborious orient ivory, spheres in spheres,  
The carved Malayan crests, and battle-chests  
From the sides of palms.*

TERNSON. THE PRINCESS.

## THE LADY BRASSEY MUSEUM,

24, PARK LANE.

### SOME NOTES ON A FEW OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTS.



THE ground-floor of the museum building is entered through a pair of folding doors, the inner sides of which are covered with a number of square plaques of teak, carved in low relief. These are of Bombay work, and are selected from nearly a hundred others used in various parts of the building, every one of a different pattern. The pillars in front of them are part of a carved screen from Lahore. The staircase and balustrades with their arched openings and carved work, were executed in London.

The basis of the lower room is what was known as the Durbar Hall of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, with additions of carved screens acquired at the exhibition and a certain amount of work executed in corresponding character in London. A large portion of the carving is the work of Mohammed Baksh and Juma (whose names are written in Persian over the centre window), two natives of Bhera Shahpur district, in the north-west of the Panjab. The style is the wooden style of the Panjab, and especially of Amritzur, in teak, pine, and shissam woods. The brass lanterns are those originally in the Durbar Hall. The brass central lantern is hung from eight brass chains acquired in India, worked with elephants and other figures. The pair of folding doors leading into the side street are of teak, from Saharanpur in the North-west Provinces, famous for its wood-carving. The alcove is cushioned with Turkish embroidery work purchased in Cairo, originally made for the Sultan Abdul Aziz. The panels on either side of the entrance contain various Eastern arms; elephant goads; curious chain armour of the Bornean pirates of brass with turtle-shell plaques; a number of Malay krisies; a fine elephant tusk presented by Sir Frederick Weld, and a pair of elaborately carved tusks from Burmah.

On the staircase are two suits of Bornean chain-mail, some harness inlaid with turquoise from Bokhara, and a selection of specimens from the collection of embroideries. On the top of the staircase the window case contains birds of paradise from New Guinea and a specimen of an extraordinary paradox, the animal known as the duck-billed platypus, from Australia. Close by is a collection of boats and models of boats, amongst them the small child's toy boat found by the "Sunbeam" floating on the ocean many hundred miles from land.

The columns of the gallery arcade and the frieze above them, are portions of a screen from Bombay exhibited at the Colonial Exhibition,

# Appendix 5. Pages from the Hastings exhibition catalogue of 1885.

a Palooka. A drawing and full description of this rare necklaces is given on p. 283 of 'A Voyage in the Southern', by Lady Brassey.

368. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE KING OF SIAM, KING CHULALONGKORN. Presented to Lady Brassey.

369. PHOTOGRAPH OF KING OF SIAM AND FAMILY.

370. CEDAR. *Bermuda.*

371, 372. TRIDACNA GIGANTEA OR GIANT. *Pacific Seas.*

This monstrous bivalve was sent to Lady Brassey by Captain Bridge of H.M.S. *Esperanza*, from Australia. It measures 2 feet 10 inches in width by 1 foot 10 inches in length, and weighs 266 lbs. These large bivalves are often used as *berdiers*, or tools for holding holy water. A very noted pair are those in the Church of St. Sulpice in Paris.

373. HAUSSER ON PIER, with handlo inlaid with mother o' pearl. *Japan.*

374. OLANOS ORNAMENT, used also as an idol. *Als Islands, Shortland Group, Solomon Isles.*

375. SHIELD, containing various ethnographical specimens.

1. Native Flutes. *Nadup, Northern New Britains.* Instruments made of cane engraved or burnt in with a pattern.

2. Armlet, a piece of armour worn above the shoulder by a Fijian warrior.

3. Girdle made of shells, the complete costume of a native woman. *Fiji.*

4. Fijian neck ornament, bar's tusk.

5. Mummified or monumental head of a woman, from the north coast of the Island of Mallicolo, New Hebrides. The skull has a peculiar formation caused by pressure at an early age. Shortly after a child is born, the mother binds the forehead with a strip from the eyebrows until the hair is reached, the string passing round the back of the head, and it is only taken off occasionally until the child is six months or even a year old. This artificial deformation, in the main symmetrical, is one of the commonest among the ancient South American crania. This woman is supposed to have been put to death, according to native custom, for having given birth to two daughters. These skulls are extremely rare, and are exhaustively treated in a paper by Professor Flower, F.R.S., &c., in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute, vol. ii., p. 75.

6. Tattooing needle. *Fiji.*

7. Native Hammer. *Weg Australia.* This type is peculiar to the

natives of Australia. It consists of an adze held by a wythe of wood, and cemented with native pitch.

8. Native Comb. *Ugi, Solomon Islands.*

9. Stone Adze, used by the party of natives when Captain Cook was attached on the Island of Erromanga, New Hebrides, 1774. (A native now alive at Dillon Bay remembers hearing of this from his father.)

10. Coconut Scrapers of shell. *Ugi, Solomon Islands.*

11. Stick, for beating the paper mulberry bark in the manufacture of "Tappa." *Fiji.*

12. Ear ornaments. *Taamboko, Guadalcanar, Solomon Islands.*

13. Necklet worn by men. *Nadup, Northern New Britains.*

14. Castanets used in dancing. *Ugi, Solomon Islands.*

15. Club or tappa stick used for beating out native cloth. *Erromanga, New Hebrides.*

16. New Guinea money.

17. Arrows. *Erromanga, New Hebrides.*

18. Bone fish-hook. *Ugi, Solomon Islands.*

19. Ear ornament made of teeth. *Makio, Duke of York Island.*

20. Neck ornament of Wild Boar's Tusk.

21. Girdle or complete Lady's Dress. *Island of Rotewala.*

376. WOODEN BOTTLE. *Minor, Caroline Islands.* For use in CANOES.

377. HEADDRESS OF FEATHERS. *Line Islands, South Pacific.*

378. PADDLE. *South Sea Islands.* Very beautifully carved.

This paddle, formerly in the celebrated "Whitfield" Collection, is said to have been taken from the savage who killed Captain Cook.

379. SILVER ANULETS. *Trinidad.* Worn by coolies. A description of the coolie jewellery is given in Lady Brassey's last book, 'In the Trades, the Tropics, and the Boaring Forties,' pp. 115, 165.

380. ROSARIES OF GREEN AND WHITE BEADS WITH MOTHER-OF-PEARL. *Church of the Holy Sepulchre.*

381. SPOON OR BOWL. *Galapagos Islands.* Tortoise-shell.

382. TAPPA MALLETS. *Fiji.*

383. BATH CLOS. *Turkish.* Inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

384. GROUP OF GORGONIA UMBELLA, *Mauritius, WITH DISTICHOPORA. Australia.*



## **Appendix 6. Summary of the Brassey Collection at Bexhill Museum.**

Annie Lady Brassey (1839-1887) collected objects from all around the world and displayed them at her houses and at public exhibitions to raise money for charitable causes. The Lady Brassey collection at Bexhill Museum was donated by her daughter Lady Mabelle Egerton in October 1920 and one piece in 1921. Most of the material was from Lady Brassey's country residence of Normanhurst Court, Catsfield, East Sussex.

### **Geological Collection**

#### **Palaeontological specimens**

Bexhill Museum's curator Henry Sargent accessioned 462 of Brassey's fossils. The accessioning may have occurred several years after the collection was donated. Some specimens have subsequently been lost, stolen or have disintegrated. The collection has been re-sorted as it was mixed in with the other Geological collections at the museum. Lady Brassey's labels and card mounts made identification possible despite many of the numbers having become detached. Evidently more of her fossils were donated than was recorded as I can now account for 505 fossils and a collection of 10 reproduction dinosaur bones. The printed catalogue for the collections at Normanhurst Court for 1876 shows that there were originally 602 specimens in the collection. The current condition of the specimens is variable, many have suffered water damage, pyrite decay or are simply dirty. The fossils were accessioned with the numbers F41 - F503, the numbers F1 - F40 were subsequently used for locally collected material from various collectors. I have discovered Brassey Fossils that use numbers between F1 and F40 which are not recorded anywhere. I suspect that Bexhill Museum's curator re-used Brassey's numbering system (although this is not the numbering system used in 1878) starting at F41 and was later presented with the rest of the collections that used lower numbers.

#### **Mineral & Rock specimens**

Like the fossils, the minerals and rocks were integrated into the rest of the collections at Bexhill Museum. I am currently identifying and separating Brassey material in order to catalogue the collection, there are 156

specimens that likely to be Brassey's. The accession register records that 98 specimens were donated in 1920, 25 of which have not been located. The minerals and rocks were given the accession numbers M1 - M44; the sequence is then broken and the rest of the collection is numbered M98 and up, interdispersed with material from other collectors. Many of the specimens are marked with another 'M' number which does not correlate with the accession register or Brassey's 1878 catalogue, in some cases it has been crossed out. These 'M' numbers appear on a couple of specimens that are not Brassey's, I would suggest that it was a numbering system started at Bexhill Museum in 1920 but soon abandoned.

A significant amount of the Geological material bear the labels of the dealer Bryce Wright (1850-1895). It is likely that Brassey purchased much of her material from him. Wright also wrote most of Brassey's catalogues together with papers on some of her specimens. A large proportion of the fossils from Suffolk from the Red and Coralline Crag formations appear to be associated with the palaeontologist and dealer Edward Charlesworth (1813-1893). In particular there is a small case of fossil mollusc which show predation by *Naticid* gastropods. The text within the case is written and signed by Charlesworth (a photograph of this piece appears on page 20 of *Geology & the Local Museum*, by Simon Knell & Michael Taylor, HMSO, 1989). Charlesworth is known to have visited Lady Brassey at Normanhurst Court in October 1877.

### **Conchological Collections**

Lady Brassey's shell collection has recently been 'rediscovered' at Bexhill Museum. There is no reference to this collection in the museum's documentation and the material was thought to have been dispersed when the Normanhurst Estate was sold off. The similarity in label style and handwriting on the specimens eventually led to the realisation that this was Brassey material. There are 122 lots of shells, including landsnails and marine gastropods and bivalves. Most of the sites that the molluscs were collected from match those visited by Brassey's steam yacht *The Sunbeam* on her circumnavigation of 1876-77 and it is likely that she collected them herself. Dr June Chatfield has suggested the possibility that a large proportion of the unprovenanced shells at Bexhill Museum may have been

part of the Brassey collection; more work is needed to establish if this is the case.

### **Ethnographic Collections**

Most of Lady Brassey's Ethnographic collections are now at Hastings Museum but there are 12 artefacts at Bexhill Museum. The collection consists of 4 greenstone adzes from New Guinea, a turtle bone bladed adze from Matty Island, Melanesia, an adze with a shell blade from the Soloman Islands, 2 small granite headed axes from Australia and 2 glass tipped arrows from Tierro del Fuego. These pieces were accessioned with the numbers E1 - E12. Again the Lady Brassey material seems to be the formative part of the collections at Bexhill Museum. The numbers themselves may originally have been Brassey's own system although the numbers do not tally against the Brassey catalogue at Hastings Museum.

Bexhill Museum's accession register includes an entry 'EA8' for a black ceramic South American pot with incised decoration. The pot was 6½ high and wide. This was part of the Brassey collection but it cannot be found and so must be presumed lost or stolen. It was also labelled with the number 'P6' and 'VS82'.

Robert Mucci, the museum's honorary ethnographer, has suggested that, due to the quality of many of the unprovenanced Ethnographic items at the museum, they may be from Lady Brassey's collection. It may be possible to determine if this is the case by careful checking of Brassey's printed catalogues.

### **Taxidermy Collections**

The museum possesses a large case (6' 6" tall) of tropical birds from the Lady Brassey collection, its accession number is BF36. This was constructed in 1883 and was on display at Normanhurst Court. It contains 43 specimens arranged on limbs of a small tree. Each specimen has an adjacent number and there is an accompanying list of species. The birds are somewhat faded and the painted back to the case has been replaced and is now plain.



## **Archaeological Collections**

There are 7 green glass vessels from ancient Cyprus, mostly from the Roman period. Presumably these came from the excavation conducted by Colonel Falkland Warren at Kourium 1883-84, which Lady Brassey paid for in return for some of the finds. The collection is in need of conservation as 3 of the pieces have been broken. Most of Brassey's material from Cyprus is now in Hastings Museum. One of the artefacts, a small glass lid, is numbered 'F.E. 591', the prefix 'F.E.' stands for Fine Arts Oriental. According to the Brassey accession register at Hastings Museum the Cypriot material should be prefixed 'C'. There is no mention of these artefacts in Bexhill Museum's past documentation.

## **Miscellaneous**

Bexhill Museum has a 24½ inch high alabaster model of the Leaning Tower of Pisa from the Lady Brassey collection at Normanhurst Court which is accessioned as Y1. The tower and base are separate and there are numerous small bells, a few of which have been lost. The model was given to the museum on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1921 by Lady Mabelle Egerton, a year later than the rest of the documented collection.

## **Display Cases**

The Minute book for the Bexhill Museum Association for December 9<sup>th</sup> 1920 records:

"Mr H.J. Sargent gave the monthly report of additions to the collections in the Museum. Particulars were given of the gift to the Museum by Lady Mabelle Egerton (on behalf of her son, the Hon. H.G. Egerton, of Mountfield Court Robertsbridge) of a number of exhibition cases and a valuable collection of specimens."

The cases are probably the hardwood and glass tablecases that Bexhill Museum still uses. It is likely that these were the cases that the Geological and Conchological specimens were displayed in at Normanhurst Court. Using the 1878 catalogue and the collections at Bexhill Museum it would be possible to partly reconstruct the displays as they were in Lady Brassey's day.

## Documents

There is a manuscript by E.A. Charlesworth "Notes on the coral dwelling shell *Magilus*, by E.Charlesworth, the drawings by Hank [?] Wood, July 1878." This is from the Brassey collection and glued into it is a reprinted paper, "On a New Coral, *Stylaster stellulatus*; and Note on *Tubipora musica*." by Charles Stewart, F.L.S., Hon. Sec. R.M.S, which was read before the Royal Microscopical Society, March 6<sup>th</sup> 1878. The coral specimen was collected by Mr H.P. Potter who accompanied the Brasseys on their voyage around the world in the *Sunbeam* in 1876-77. On the front cover is written "Mrs Brassey with Percy Potter's kind regards, 29.7.78."

In Bexhill Museum's accession register is an entry 1992.124 "Lady Brassey's address book", this is not Annie Brassey's as it dates between 1912-1914 and is most likely to be Lady Idina Brassey's, Thomas Allnutt Brassey's wife.

There are two lithographs in the collection, one of 'Mrs Brassey' on the *Sunbeam*, c.1878 and another of her husband Thomas Brassey, who later became the first Earl Brassey.

Bexhill Museum also has a Copy of the 1881 edition of Lady Brassey's book *A Voyage in the Sunbeam*, a copy of *A Catalogue of Works of Art and Curiosities at Normanhurst, Battle*, 1878 by 'A.M.' [Alfred Maskell] and Bryce Wright, with additional catalogue for 1881 and a copy of *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Natural History, Ethnological Specimens & Curiosities collected by Lady Brassey*, 1885 by Bryce Wright. Clowes & Sons, London.



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(Lady Brassey also had printed for private circulation *Tahiti*, photographs with text in 1882)

Griffith, M., (1894), Lord and Lady Brassey, in *The Strand Magazine*, 8/37: 517-527, London

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"Miscellaneous, colonial garden parties, Hastings, Liverpool & St. Andrews elections"

Maskell, Alfred, (writing as 'A.M.') (1878), *A catalogue of Works of Art and Curiosities at Normanhurst Court, Battle*, Chiswick Press, London. Includes "A Catalogue of geological specimens, minerals, fossils, shells, corals, and other scientific objects" by B.M. Wright.



BARTERING WITH FUEGIANS.





HOW THE JOURNAL WAS WRITTEN.

NO. 11